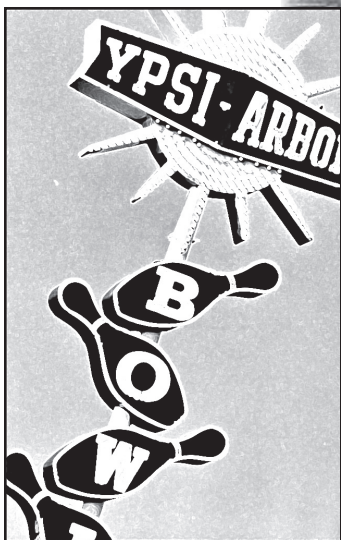


Heritage NEWS



November 2012

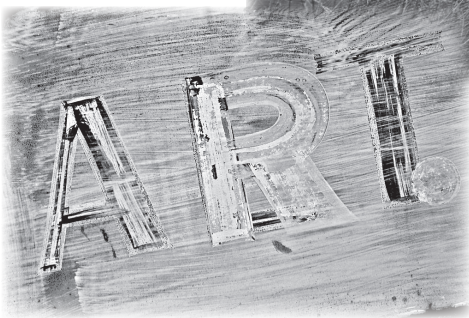
Preserved / Removed



The Ypsi-Arbor bowling alley sign has been removed from Washtenaw Avenue, but the Bull Durham Tobacco poster still peeks out from the west wall of the historic Follett House on East Cross Street. The Durham sign is among several signs preserved by the City's recent sign ordinance and is protected for posterity.

Disappeared / Fading

The Ypsilanti Iron Works' sign has disappeared with the development of Water Street, and "ART" is gradually fading from our walls.



Don't be satisfied seeing these local examples of sign painters' art in washed-out black-and-white postage stamp-size reprints in the newsletter. Come to the November 7 program and enjoy them in gorgeous historic colors.

Next General Meeting



- Lynda Hummel's photos of Ypsilanti signs
- Kevin Short on the history of the Huron Sign Company
- Teresa Gillotti on Ypsilanti's updated sign ordinance

**7:30 p.m.
Wednesday
7 November 2012
Ladies' Literary Club**

The public is invited

Ypsiphiles who have already picked up Lynda Hummel's colorful calendars featuring unique signage in Our Town will not be disappointed at the enormous and colorful projections of these images at the November 7 General Membership meeting of the Heritage Foundation. Huron Sign Company's Kevin Short will tell of his family's historic enterprise of placing signs boosting Ypsilanti over the year. And City Hall's Teresa Gillotti will discuss recent changes in the City's sign ordinance.

The September issue of Heritage News focused on historic signs in Ypsilanti, the fading tradition of local sign shops, Lynda Hummel's photo essay of hand-painted signs in Ypsilanti, the City's new sign ordinance, Huron Sign Company's history, the "Billboard Bandits" of the seventies, more. November's program will address many of these topics and is open to anyone who reads signs along the highway.

All meetings of the Ypsilanti Heritage Foundation are held at the Ladies' Literary Club, 218 N. Washington Street, Ypsilanti, at 7:30 p.m. and the public is welcome. Refreshments follow the presentations and everyone gets ample opportunity to meet and greet the evening's presenters.

Back Story / Ken Burns

History's Documentarian

By Gwendolyn Purdom, *Preservation*, Fall 2012

Ken Burns's documentary series *The Civil War* riveted the country when it debuted in 1990, and his other American history-focused works have examined subjects from Lewis and Clark to Prohibition. "Every film I've done has brought me to a place that has had extraordinary historical resonance," Burns says. *Preservation* spoke with Burns about his work and the importance of place.

Q: What do you think it is about places that makes them so important to understanding our history?

A: Whatever we do, we leave some sort of residue of who we are, our intentions and hopes, our fears and dreams, and I think historical places represent us. They radiate with what we find beautiful and, in the case of places we save, they remind us who we think we are and who we might become going forward.

Q: How would you rate how well we're preserving our history in these places?

A: We're still a relatively young country, and for way too long we just felt that everything that we had done before was disposable. I think we've woken up after the Second World War and begun to understand that we really did need to save. Human nature never changes, and particularly in tough times, these places help. You know when you're standing on the rim of the Grand Canyon, you're walking into the Lincoln Memorial, you're getting a tour of Monticello, they're not asking you, "Are you red state or blue state? Are you rich, are you poor? Are you black, are you white? Are you gay, are you straight? Are you male, are you female?" Even whether you're an American or not. They're just saying, "Welcome to something that



Upcoming projects for Burns include films on the Vietnam War, the Roosevelt family, and Jackie Robinson

we"—and that means not just them, but all of us—"consider valuable."

Q: Is there one topic or event that you feel has shaped our story more than others?

A: The most important event in American history is the Civil War. No doubt about it. So those battlefields, and the residue of that conflict, wherever it may be—in Richmond, Va., or Montgomery, Ala., or Washington, D.C., or Gettysburg, or Antietam—all of these places have huge significance for me.

Q: How would you define a preservationist? Do you consider yourself a preservationist?

A: Yes, very much so. It can take many, many forms. It can be the preservation of ideas. The preservation of images. The preservation of words. I sort of deal in that arena, but it may also mean the preservation of places. I take advantage of those who work heroically to save battlefields and houses and architecture and things like that. A preservationist is someone who knows you can't possibly have a future unless you have a past.

In the 1960s, brothers Rick and Ken Burns were students in the editor's Creative Problem Solving classes at Ann Arbor's Pioneer High School. Editors of *Preservation*, the magazine of the National Trust for Historic Preservation have kindly permitted YHF to reprint their Fall 2012 interview with the famed preservationist and documentary filmmaker

Q: So many of your films have colorful stories and anecdotes. Is there a particular moment in history that you wish you could have been present for?

A: I'd obviously have to be there at Ford's Theatre and stop the assassin. That would be the thing where you'd want to do intervention. But with any of these places, what you get excited about is exactly what you're talking about [with colorful stories and anecdotes bringing the past to life]. Faulkner said, "History is not was, but is." And that's a really great thing to say, because there are moments, if I do my job well, you do feel like you're there.

To read more from *Preservation's* interview with Ken Burns, visit PreservationNation.org/online



Preservation magazine is the publication of the National Trust for Historic Preservation

Documentaries by Burns' company, Florentine Films:

Baseball: The Tenth Inning

Unforgivable Blackness:

The Rise and Fall of Jack Johnson
Jazz

Frank Lloyd Wright

The West

William Segal

Thomas Hart Benton

Statue of Liberty

The National Parks:

American's Best Idea

Horatio's Drive:

America's First Road Trip

In the Marketplace

Lewis & Clark: The Journey of the

Corps of Discovery

Vézelay

Empire of the Air:

The Men Who Made Radio

The Shakers:

Hands to Work, Hearts to God

The War

Mark Twain

Not For Ourselves Alone:

the Story of Elizabeth Cady Stanton

& Susan B. Anthon

Thomas Jefferson

Baseball

The Civil War

Huey Long

Brooklyn Bridge

Prohibition

FILMS IN PRODUCTION

The Dust Bowl

The Central Park Five

The Roosevelts

Jackie Robinson

Sign painters' art is kept alive by master artist John Copley

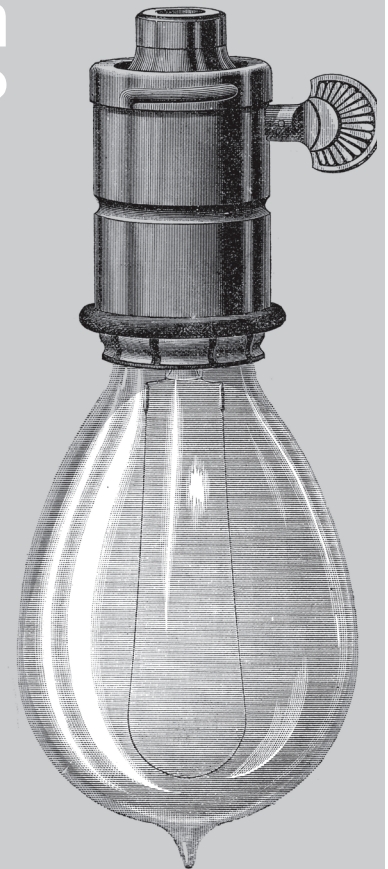
There are still sign painters around. At age 66, John A. Copley still paints signs occasionally. He and Zeke Mallory have shut down their Ann Arbor-based Crow Quill Graphics, but Copley is still seen on his ladder around town from time to time. The son of a Latin scholar and textbook author, Copley was not quite named for the early American portrait painter, John Singleton Copley, although they were both highly dedicated to their crafts in the visual arts. John A. is known in Ypsilanti for his big sign on the south wall of the Sidetrack Grill & Bar on East Cross Street.



John S. Copley

Have you seen the light?

Perhaps the most subtle piece of historic preservation in town is the old Edison light bulb hanging in front of the box office window at the Riverside Arts Center. Barry LaRue rescued the installation from the renovation of Albert Kahn's Hill Auditorium on the University of Michigan main campus. The antique bulb was LaRue's touch—and very much appreciated by those who revere an authentic presentation



What We Do

Through its numerous yearly activities the Ypsilanti Heritage Foundation educates the community about the philosophy and purpose of historic preservation and encourages public and private preservation efforts in the city.

The YHF -

- Publishes a bimonthly newsletter
- Hosts an informative public program on preservation or historical topics in September, November, January, and March
- Presents preservation awards to local homeowners at its Marker Awards Banquet every May
- Sponsors a popular annual historic home tour in August and makes financial contributions to local preservation projects



The Ypsilanti Heritage Foundation

Heritage News

Claudia Pettit
945 Sheridan
Ypsilanti, MI 48197

Ypsilanti Heritage Foundation

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*Dedicated to the belief that one of Ypsilanti's
greatest resources is its historic architecture*

See you at the General Meeting - Wednesday, 19 September, at 7:30 p.m.

Heritage News is the newsletter of the Ypsilanti Heritage Foundation. It is published five times a year: September, November, January, March, and May; and distributed, free of charge to the membership by mail, and made available to the public at City Hall, Farmers' Market, and various business locations in the three business districts in the City.



Sign Quiz:

Can you identify the signs in Lynda Hummel's calendar title (above)? One does not have to be born 'n' bred in Ypsi to recognize Terry Bakery's classic design (letter "g") or the old sign on the north wall of Miller Motors (second letter "s"), but what about the "S-I-N"?

The first "s" is long gone from the Beer Cooler on Michigan Avenue, sacrificed for the Water Street Project. The giant skate at the roller rink east of town is gone as well, but lives on in Hummel's letter "n". Both signs have been destroyed. The letter "i" may puzzle at first; it's the little elf at the other end of the rolling pin on the Terry Bakery design.

All this—and more—will be revealed in the Ypsilanti Heritage Foundation's program on November 7.

2012/2013 SCHEDULE

Meetings are held at the Ladies' Literary Club,

SIGNS

W/ Lynda Hummel's photos,
Kevin Short's history of Huron Sign
Co. , and Teresa Gillotti's com-
ments on the updated Ypsilanti sign
ordinance

7

NOVEMBER

23

JANUARY

TBA

20

MARCH

TBA

22

MAY

Annual Marker Awards Banquet

